Liberalisation of restrictions imposed on foreign tourists for visiting Darjeeling

1729. SHRI RATNA BAHADUR RAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any step to liberalise or revoke the restrictions imposed on foreign tourists for visiting Darjeeling; and

(b) whether Government have evolved any proposal for the development of Tourism in Darjeeling particularly after the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council have suggested the following proposals for development of tourism in Darjeeling:—

1. Setting up of wayside facilities at 3 places;

2. Setting up of Tourist Complex at Mirik;

3. Setting up of 3-star hotel by I.T.D.C. jointly with the Government of West Bengal;

4. Transit camp at Bagdogra airport;

5. Setting up of Food Craft Institute at Darjeeling; and

6. Yatri Niwas at Darjeeling.

The detailed proposals are awaited from the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council in regard to the schemes at Sr. No. 1 to 4. As regards the setting up of Food Craft Institute, the Department of Tourism have already identified the building for the Institute. Further, the State Government have been requested to get the society registered, which would run the Institute.

As regards Yatri Niwas at Darjeeling the Department of Tourism have already sanctioned Rs. 40.00 lakhs to the State Govt. of West Bengal. It has been decided by the State Govt. to transfer the project to the Hill Council.

Women engine drivers and ticket examiners in the Railways

1730. SHRI THOMAS KUTHIRAVATTOM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of women engine drivers and the Ticket Examiners in the Indian Railways;

(b) whether Government are satisfied with their performance; and

(c) whether Government intend to recruit more women as engine drivers and Travelling Ticket Examiners?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha. There is no separate recruitment for women candidates. Further, in the category of loco running staff, the extant rules provide for direct recruitment only at the level of Diesel Assistants and Electric Assistants.

Conversion of British viceroy's residence into a five star hotel

1731. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Vice Regal Lodge in Shimla, the summer residence of Viceroy during the British period, is sought to be converted into a five-star hotel by ITDC; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) and (b) Government have considered from time to time the possibility of locating the